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MEDIA RELEASE

AIR CHATHAMS SPONSORS CHATHAM ISLAND OLYMPIC POTENTIAL

Air Chathams is excited to announce their support and sponsorship of Tristan Gregory-Hunt, a Chatham Islander who is training for selection in the rowing lightweight double for the 2020 Olympic Games. Tristan was recently competing at the Henley Royal Regatta as part of the Wairau Eight and regularly lines up against top New Zealand athletes Mahe Drysdale and Robbie Manson.

Representing New Zealand in 2020 is the current aim for Gregory-Hunt, who was raised in Owenga and lived on the island for his primary school years. With no secondary school on the Chatham Islands, his family moved to mainland New Zealand enrolling Tristan at St John's College in Hastings, Hawke's Bay like many other Chatham Islanders. For Tristan, this was the beginning of both a significant rowing and musical career.

After his parents suggested he attend a "give it a try" type rowing course run by the Hawke's Bay Rowing Club in Napier, Tristan found his second passion. "From then I was totally hooked! I love the sport and technical side of rowing."

Winning the Gold Medal in the Club Single race at the 2017 NZ National Rowing Championships had Tristan (representing Wairua Rowing Club) up against 62 other New Zealand athletes. The training, dedication and discipline to achieve the win has put him on the pathway to an elite level for the sport. The boat he won with was his own and christened "Morning Star" in memory of his grandfather, Timothy Mark Gregory-Hunt, who had the same name for his island boat.

Air Chathams is proud to see their colours and sponsorship reflected in Tristan's new race boat named "44 South" and rowing suit and also his recognition and attachment to the Chatham Islands. Many family members still live there and as Tristan puts it, "On the Chathams I found people accepted you for who you are – your strengths and weaknesses whether they be physical or other. The people on the Chatham Islands have a great impact on my life being supportive of what I do today."

While Tristan attended the NZ School of Music at Victoria University (he is an accomplished saxophonist), he is currently working in Blenheim as an engineer and undertaking high performance training at the Central Rowing Regional Performance Centre based in Blenheim. With around 11 training sessions a week, and a plan for 8 rowing regattas, series and trials on his schedule for the next 8 months there is no doubt about the level of dedication needed.

The team at Air Chathams will be following with interest, sharing Tristan's progress and supporting his endeavours to make the New Zealand Olympic team. We encourage you to have a look at and follow his social media accounts @Chathamrower_nz.

Ends.

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